

The Bell-Tower NEWS

Florissant Presbyterian Church

December 2020

*Enter as Guests, Leave as
Friends, Return as Family*

A Very Different Christmas

Each day, the case numbers of COVID-19 go up and the fear increases. The county's number of cases is rising and worse the rural counties are feeding into an already overextended hospital system. As our prayers go out that North County doesn't become the epicenter of virus outbreaks, how do we say anything hopeful about our world these days? We are stuck, unable to see an invisible enemy unfolding around us and unable to get our footing on what it really means to celebrate in this overturned and twisted world. Maybe, this is where we all find ourselves. Simply trying to hold on to hope. Yet, holding on to Christ' Hope is a great foundation for starting our journey in Advent and Christmas.

God is breaking into our world with real hope in the person of Jesus. Hopefulness during a pandemic is hard. It is hard to face the fears that take a grip in the night with concern for family, friends, and neighbors. How can we be hopeful with these new waves of sickness

and uncertainty? As we are all trying to find ways to simply hold on, are we also trying to be hopeful with and to one another. As we struggle with all the limits and changes around our celebration of Advent and Christmas, we must remember that hope is at the center of the miraculous and humbling act of God in Bethlehem. Through the gift of the Christ Child, God has brought light into the darkness of our live and hope into a world drowning in fear, grief and despair.

It is not lost on me that this virus has crept up during the start of the colder weather, and especially during Advent and Christmas this year. Who among us doesn't grieve the losses right now? Who among us doesn't feel disoriented, paralyzed and unable to predict what the future may look like as the early winter unfolding outside our windows? Where is the Christmas tree? Where are all the colored lights? Where are the parties and gift exchanges? Where are the poinsettias? Where are the children laughing, playing, and getting excited about Santa and opening gifts?



The challenge for us in 2020 is whether we can embolden the love and embody the hope that was revealed to us in that newborn baby in Bethlehem. During this year's Advent season, how will we align ourselves with those Jesus called "the least of these" in Matthew 25? How will we serve the vulnerable, the out of work, the hungry? Will you be able to see the baby Jesus through your service to the strangers you encounter? We must commit ourselves to reshape and change the traditional and regular old ways of celebrating the holiday season, so that we can be even more humble, generous, compassionate, and kind in a world that so need's Christ's Hope. As we live into the hope that the Christ Child brings into our lives during Advent, I pray that God will prepare us at FPC to shine with and share in the light of God's incarnational hope.

Although in this year most everything is different around our Advent and Christmas celebrations, please join us on your journey from Advent to Christmas. While many are staying safe at home and watching on Face Book and our website, some are meeting for in-person worship with safe social distancing, and we have many listening from our parking lot through our FM transmitter, please, make plans to, in some form, participate with us at Florissant Presbyterian on your journey from Advent to Christmas. Each Sunday at 10:15, we will share scripture, a message, sing Christmas carols, and start worship with the lighting of the Advent Wreath. On Christmas Eve, our

service will be at 7:00 with candle light and (individually sealed) communion. You are invited to join us as we journey together toward celebrating God's living hope in the birth of Jesus.

God Bless This Very Different Christmas,
Pastor Sean

CLERK'S REPORT

The monthly Session of Florissant Presbyterian Church was held on Sunday, November 15, 2020 at 11:40 a.m. in Harmon Hall with social distancing and masks.

The sanctuary remains open for church services since Pentecost Sunday on May 31st. It is also on Facebook live and broadcast to the parking lot through the FM receiver. Masks will be required, and social distancing maintained plus all St Louis County guidelines will be followed.

Candy continues meeting with other Clerks of Session via ZOOM.

Treasurer's Report: Financials have been posted.

Task Force: The next Sack supper giveaway will be the 2nd Thursday in December between 5:30 and 7:30pm.

The Mobile Market in November was held November 14th.



The Trick-or-Treat candy give-away on October 31st was a big success and lots of fun.

Trivia Night plans are on hold.

The Task Force is focusing on “connecting to the community”.

Congregation Care continues cards, calls, and visits to FPC members.

Church Life: Stewardship campaign “Challenging Times” will end in November. Hanging of the Greens will be Saturday, November 28th at 10 am. Mariners donated to TEAM and “Summons of Joy”. Advent calendars have been mailed.

Church Operations: More tree trimming, and vine removal has been completed.

Worship: Choir is now participating in Sunday worship. Christmas Eve service will be held.

Christian Education: Pastor Sean will lead Adult Sunday School in an Advent study.

Offerings can be mailed to the church. Paula is there Monday through Wednesday. Also, gift cards can be purchased by calling Paula or on Sunday morning. PayPal is available.

CHURCH NEWS

2021 Pledge Drive – If you have not turned in your 2021 pledge card, please do so.

Advent Folders – Your donations this year will go to support those folks in the Florissant and Hazelwood areas in need through the efforts of TEAM.

Celebrating the Advent Season

As we begin the 2020 Advent season, we anticipate with hope all of the ways God still comes near. The 2020 Advent season will look a little different. The sanctuary is decorated with the Nativity scene and wreaths hanging on the walls. To guarantee physical distancing, the tree that typically stands in front of the sanctuary was unable to be placed this year out of concern for the safety of all decorating. Out of an abundance of safety, there will be no choir as we respond to the current pandemic wave. At this time, the sanctuary will remain open for worship throughout this advent season under the current social distancing and masking requirements. Join us as we share in the blessings of the season, the wonders of simplicity, and the faith of the season. Whether that be from the sanctuary, Facebook live, from the parking lot or on YouTube in recording. We will culminate the season with the Christmas Eve Service completing the year with the faith and strength provided us through the Hope, Joy, Preparation and Love of God. Blessings.

Christmas Eve Service – Please join together December 24 at 7:00 pm to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior.

FPC Apparel

We are ordering more FPC apparel. The color will remain navy with white print. If you would like to order a t-shirt, crew neck sweatshirt, or hooded sweatshirt, please let Paula know. The sizes and pricing are listed below. For sizes 2X-4X, please add the appropriate dollars to the base price. Please put your payment in the mail or drop it by church.



T-Shirts

S-XL \$10.40
2X (+\$3)
3X (+\$4)
4X (+\$5)

Crew Neck Sweat

S-XL \$15.40

Hooded Sweat

S-XL \$20.40

¼ Zip Sweat

S-XL \$25.40

BIRTHDAYS

2 Betty Williams*
4 Steve Rosenberger
18 Ruth Musket
19 David Arseneau
21 Mary Ruyle
21 Ben Mahurin
22 Bob Williams*
27 Sam Tumminia

*Happy 90 plus Betty & Bob Williams

ANNIVERSARIES

Sean & Paula Butler
Married 33 years December 26

WEDDINGS

Brandon Goehri and Heather Garrison were married on October 10 in Oklahoma. Vickie, Gary, and Kristin Goehri are so happy to welcome Heather and her daughter Ella into their family.

IN LOVING MEMORY

Herbert Lawoe

PRAYERS

Jean, Trish, Jon, Marilynn, Doris, Carol, Sara, Pamela, Georgiana, Mary's brother, Barb's son-in-law Cliff, Sue's friend Lill, Ruth and her great grandson, Sue and her brothers-in-law Jeff and Shaw and her sister Lynn.



FPC HALLOWEEN GRAB N GO



MERRY
CHRISTMAS!